



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Jacksonville District

# News Release

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **Navarre beach renourishment project resumes after thorough inspection by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Jacksonville, Fla. – Dredging on the Navarre Beach renourishment project resumed yesterday after a four-day hiatus imposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District. The Corps required the contractor, Weeks Marine, to suspend work on March 31 after a Kemp's ridley turtle, an endangered species, was accidentally killed during the dredging process.

The turtle was pulled into the drag-arm of the Hopper Dredge Lindholm as the vessel worked about four miles off-shore. A turtle deflector, a V-shaped device that moves turtles aside, was in place at the time of the incident, and relocation turtle trawling was being done.

The City of Navarre Beach was completing a 3.6 mile beach renourishment project under a Corps permit. The Corps is monitoring project progress and immediately suspended dredging operations upon notification of the incident.

Corps representatives inspected the Weeks Marine dredge's operations yesterday to review current operating procedures and to provide guidance on future operations. According to Corps regulatory officials, this review indicated that several preventative measures could reduce the likelihood of additional turtle losses. These measures include careful monitoring of the drag-arms whenever they were lifted from the bottom sand supply, ensuring the intake pumps have been turned off completely, and ensuring that the dredge only operates when the turtle trawler is operating in close proximity to and in front of the Lindholm. The turtle trawler captures and relocates turtles as the dredge approaches.

The Corps works diligently to prevent turtle 'takes' and in the 1990s introduced the first deflector device to move sea turtles from harm's way. The Corps also initiated consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), which resulted in the Gulf of Mexico Regional Biological Opinion. The opinion allots turtle takes in the Gulf of Mexico for the four Corps of Engineers' districts in the Gulf region.

Warmer water temperatures this winter have allowed a higher number of turtles in the waters off the Florida panhandle. Corps and NMFS officials continue to closely monitor the situation and coordinate actions to best serve the interest of the community while ensuring protection for threatened and endangered species.

For further information, please call the Jacksonville District Corporate Communication Office at 904-334-8954.

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